

Landowner Letter

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

2011



FALL

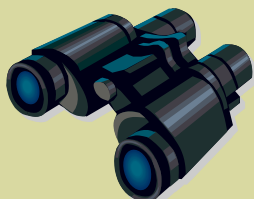


Cooper's Hawk

The Cooper's hawk is a quick, agile bird -of-prey that may be seen darting through trees or across open fields in pursuit of songbirds.

Primarily a woodland bird, many of these hawks have adapted to life in the city, feasting on the abundance of rock pigeons and mourning doves found there.

Look for this sleek raptor perched at the edge of forests and quiet neighborhoods, or soaring over open fields.



A Look Back at LIP

Reflecting on the Past, Moving into the Future

As the Division of Fish and Wildlife celebrates its **100 year anniversary** this year, it is a good time to reflect on the history and evolution of the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). In 2002 the US Fish & Wildlife Service recognized the importance of wildlife habitat management on private lands and allocated grant funding for states to provide both technical and financial assistance to landowners who wished to improve the habitat on their property. In 2003, Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife applied for and was granted this funding and so the DE Landowner Incentive Program was established.

Eight years later, grant funding for the Landowner Incentive Program has ceased (for all states), but the Division continues to work with landowners to provide technical assistance and to maintain the wildlife habitats enrolled in the program. Funding has already been allocated for properties currently enrolled in the Landowner Incentive Program, and restoration efforts will continue under LIP until the contracts are complete.

The Landowner Incentive Program has been successful in creating habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species, including many identified in the state's Wildlife Action Plan as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Field surveys this spring and summer identified a total of 116 bird species on LIP properties - 41 of which were Species of Greatest Conservation Need. LIP properties continue to attract an increasing number of wildlife species as the habitats become more established.

The success of LIP and the highly beneficial wildlife habitats that have been created are a direct result of the care and dedication that its enrolled landowners have contributed. Congratulations to all LIP landowners on the establishment of 1,535.3 acres of wildlife habitat so far! Together, the Division of Fish and Wildlife and LIP landowners are making a difference!



Early successional grassland is a key wildlife habitat that supports a wide variety of native wildlife species!
(This LIP Property owned by Leslie Merriken)

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Southbound Travelers

Yearly Raptor Migrations

Every year thousands of raptors (hawks, eagles, etc.) migrate north in the spring and return southward in the fall. Delaware is positioned directly in line with these migration corridors and provides important resting places, habitats and food sources for traveling birds of prey. Fall is a great time to view migrating hawks, eagles, osprey, and falcons. Some of these raptors may be seen flying over or perching near open farm fields, grasslands, and wetlands in search of food for their journey (meadow voles, mice, small rodents, etc.). Below is a list of migrating raptor species and the months of peak viewing opportunities.

Keep an eye out for these raptors in and around your wildlife habitats!



Sharp-shinned Hawk



American Kestrel

Species	Peak Months Observed
Osprey	September through October
Bald Eagle	September through mid-November
Golden Eagle	late October through early November
Northern Harrier	September through November
Sharp-shinned Hawk	September through November
Coopers Hawk	September through early November
Northern Goshawk	late October through mid-November
Red-shouldered Hawk	October through November
Broad-winged Hawk	Mid-September
Red-tailed Hawk	October through November
American Kestrel	September through October
Merlin	September through October
Peregrine Falcon	September through October
Black Vulture	October through November
Turkey Vulture	October through November

DE Landowner Incentive Program Updates

A total of 161 landowners have received financial assistance from LIP and over 1,535.3 acres of wildlife habitat have been restored!

- 683.2 acres of Early Successional Habitat
- 726 acres reforested
- 48 acres of wetlands restored
- 78.1 acres of invasive species control

Visit our Private
Lands Assistance
Program website:

www.fw.delaware.gov/dplap

Habitat Restoration Resources

New Online Databases for Plants and Plant Communities



The DE Statewide Vegetation Community Map

www.wra.udel.edu/nvcs

The National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS) is a map covering the United States and Canada that shows the type and extent of major vegetation communities. In Delaware, there are 140 distinct vegetation communities throughout the state. The online Delaware vegetation community map includes these communities as well as impervious (paved) surfaces, water, and non-vegetated areas (beach, tidal, mudflat, modified land). Aerial maps from 1937, 1954, 1961, 1968 and 1998 can also be viewed to look at changes in land use over time. These maps are intended to serve as baseline data on land uses in the past and present and will help influence land use decisions in the future.

Database Features

- Sea level rise scenarios
- Changes in vegetative cover
- Climate change
- Changes in habitat succession

The Flora of Delaware Online

www.wra.udel.edu/de-flora

The Flora of Delaware Online is an online database that contains basic information on the status, habitat type, and distribution of plant species in Delaware. It is based on the 2001 publication, *The Flora of Delaware: An Annotated Checklist*. This new online database includes many new plant species added since the 2001 publication as well as more information on the ecology and life history of each species. It is intended for use by landscapers, land managers, wildlife managers, planners, restoration ecologists, research biologists, educators and home gardeners.

Database Features

- Plant species selection guides (for gardening, habitat management etc.)
- Digital images to assist with plant identification
- Plant species selection guides (for gardening, habitat management etc.)
- Five search levels: Quick Search, Gardeners, Consultants, Botanists, Habitat
- Wildlife benefits
- Invasive species



Creeping Invaders

Invasive Vines Threaten Native Habitats

Invasive vines can create some of the most noticeable non-native plant infestations in our landscape. Unlike some of the lower-growing herbaceous invasive plants, vines can be seen towering over large trees, blanketing hedgerows, or climbing walls, fences and houses. Keep an eye out for these creeping invaders on your property and contact a LIP biologist if you have questions or would like advice on removal.

DAMAGE FROM VINES

Invasive vines have the ability to cause a great deal of damage to native plants and wildlife habitats. Some problems associated with invasive vines:

- **Girdling** - Some vines can girdle (squeeze) trees by growing so tightly around the trunk that the tree is unable to move nutrients to and from the roots.
- **Shading** - A thick infestation of leafy vines may block the sunlight and shade out the plant(s) underneath.
- **Tree Damage** - Vines that grow into the canopy of tall trees add weight to branches and may cause branches and limbs to break.
- **Competition** - Some vines also grow well as a ground-cover and have the potential to out-compete native vegetation for space and nutrients in the soil.



VINE REMOVAL

There are several methods of removing invasive vines from your yard or wildlife habitat. These vary depending on the type of vine and the plants growing nearby. A combination of methods may be necessary.

Below are a few suggestions.



Porcelain berry looks similar to grapevine but has berries that range in color from blue to purple, pink, turquoise and yellow.

- **Hand Pulling** - Some vines are easily pulled and can be removed by hand. This is a non-aggressive method that may help keep the vines at a manageable level without the use of chemicals. This method may not completely eliminate the problem though, as it may be difficult to pull out all of the roots.
- **Foliar Spray** - This more aggressive approach to vine removal involves spraying an approved herbicide* directly onto the plant while it is leafing out. This method should be used with caution, as there is a possibility of killing nearby native plants with the herbicide as well.
- **Cut Stump** - Cutting the vine at its base (near the ground) and placing a small amount of an approved herbicide* directly onto the stump is also a more aggressive method of removal that will lessen the possibility of killing nearby native plants with the herbicide.

**Before using herbicides, be sure to read and follow all herbicide label recommendations.*

Invasive vines to watch for:

Japanese & Chinese Wisteria

Mile-A-Minute Vine

English Ivy

Japanese Honeysuckle

Japanese Virgin's Bower

Oriental Bittersweet

Porcelain Berry

Five-leaf Akebia

Visit www.wra.udel.edu/de-flora or www.delawareinvasives.org to learn more!